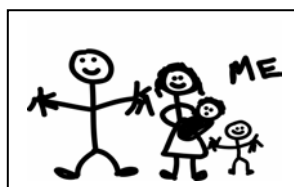




An Eligible Family's Guide to Alabama's Early Intervention System

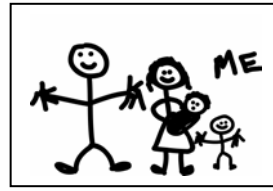


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Steve Shivers, Commissioner
Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services
2004

Alabama's Early Intervention System



An Eligible Family's Guide to Child Find: The Child Find process guides families through several activities that help them to decide whether their child is delayed in development or if early intervention supports and services are needed.

There are three steps in the EI Child Find System:

IDENTIFICATION: As a parent, when you suspect that your infant or toddler has a delay or if you know that your child has been diagnosed with a condition that may result in a delay, then IDENTIFICATION has occurred. Physicians and many agencies in the community can help to identify community resources available for children who may need early intervention supports and services. These agencies include hospitals, doctor's offices, outpatient or well-baby clinics, child health and Medicaid EPSDT programs, child day-care centers, Head Start programs, local schools, social support agencies and organizations and other health care providers.

REFERRAL: When your infant or toddler has been identified as possibly needing early intervention supports and services, the next step is a call to early intervention Child Find 1-800-543-3098 VOICE/TDD, (En Espanol 1-866-450-2838), to become connected with Alabama's Early Intervention System. If you agree that a professional should make the call, the call should be made to Child Find within two days after your child has been identified if your child is less than 3 years old. If your child is 3 years old or older, you may want to contact your state or local school system. When the call is made, the following information will be requested: your child's name, date of birth and Social Security number, your name, address and phone number, the name and phone number of your child's primary doctor and your reason for calling Child Find.

PROCESSING THE REFERRAL: Once Child Find receives a call about your child, a staff member will contact the "District Early Intervention Coordinator" (DEIC) or local contact within your community. This local contact person will call you, provide you with additional information about the system and make arrangements for an evaluation and assessment to decide if your child is eligible and to determine your child's strengths and needs. You may find out more about AEIS on the web at www.rehab.state.al.us, (Go to "Public Web Site," "Services", "Early Intervention" and "Publications and Reports").

Developmental Check List for Young Children

This check list is designed to help you understand your child's growth and development. Remember that each child develops at his or her own pace. The age listed on the checklist is the time when most children usually start the activity. If your child is not performing an activity at the age listed, there probably is no need to be concerned. But if your child is late in doing several activities, discuss it with your child's doctor.

Usual Activities During ...

1 Month

Able to raise head from surface when on tummy....._____

Pays attention to someone's face in his or her
direct line of vision....._____

Moves arms and legs in energetic manner_____

Likes to be held and rocked....._____

2 Months

Smiles and coos....._____

Rolls part way to side when lying on back....._____

Grunts and sighs_____

3 Months

Eyes follow a moving object....._____

Able to hold head erect....._____

Grasps objects when placed in his or her hand..._____

Babbles_____

4 Months

Holds a rattle for an extended period of time..._____

Laughs out loud_____

Sits supported for short periods of time....._____

Recognizes bottle and familiar faces_____

5 Months

Reaches for and holds objects....._____

Stands firmly when held....._____

Stretches out arms to be picked up....._____

Likes to play peek-a-boo

6 Months

Turns over from back to stomach....._____

Turns toward sounds_____

Sits with a little support (one hand bracing)....._____

Persistently reaches for objects out of his/her
reach_____

Listens to own voice....._____

Crows and squeals.....
 Reaches for and grasps objects and brings them
 to mouth
 Holds, sucks or bites cookie or cracker - begins
 chewing
7 Months
 Can transfer object from one hand to the other..
 Can sit for a few minutes without support.....
 Pats and smiles at image in mirror
 Creeps (pulling body with arms and leg kicks)
 Is shy at first with strangers.....
8 Months
 Can sit steadily for about five minutes
 Crawls (on hands and knees)
 Grasps things with thumb and first two fingers ...
 Likes to be near parent.....
9 Months
 Says Ma-ma or Da-da
 Responds to name.....
 Can stand for a short time holding onto support...
 Able to hit two objects together on his/her own .
 Copies sounds
10 Months
 Able to pull self up at side of crib or playpen.....
 Can drink from a cup when it is held.....
11 Months
 Can walk holding onto furniture or sides of crib
 or playpen.....
 Can find an object placed under another object ...
12 Months
 Waves bye-bye.....
 Can walk with one hand held
 Says two words besides Ma-ma/Da-da
 Enjoys some solid foods.....
 Finger-feeds himself or herself
 Likes to have an audience.....
15 Months
 Walks by himself or herself; stops creeping.....
 Shows wants by pointing and gesturing.....
 Scribbles on paper after shown.....
 Begins using a spoon.....

Cooperates with dressing _____

18 Months

Can build a tower with three blocks _____

Likes to climb and take things apart _____

Can say six words _____

Tries to put on shoes..... _____

Drinks from a cup held in both hands..... _____

Likes to help a parent..... _____

2 Years

Able to run..... _____

Walks up/down stairs using alternate feet _____

Says at least 50 words _____

Sometimes uses 2-word sentences _____

Points to objects in a book..... _____

3 Years

Can repeat two numbers in a row..... _____

Knows his or her sex..... _____

Dresses himself or herself except for buttoning..... _____

Can copy a circle..... _____

Can follow two commands of on, under or behind
(e.g., "Stand on the rug.")..... _____

Knows most parts of the body _____

Jumps, lifting both feet off ground..... _____

Can build tower with nine blocks _____

4 Years

Can repeat a simple six-word sentence..... _____

Can wash hands and face without help _____

Can copy a cross _____

Can stand on one foot..... _____

Can catch a tossed ball..... _____

5 Years

Can follow three commands _____

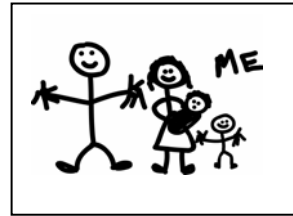
Can copy a square _____

Can skip..... _____

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For more information about Child Find, ages birth to three, or Alabama's Early Intervention System, call the Early Intervention Office at 1-800-543-3098, En Espanol, 1-866-450-2838.

Alabama's Early Intervention System



An Eligible Family's Guide to Evaluation and Assessment:

Evaluation and assessment are the activities used to decide if your child is eligible and to gather information to develop the plan for providing necessary supports for your child and family. Through evaluation and assessment, your child will be observed and tested to see how he or she is developing, and his or her specific abilities and needs will be identified so that an individual plan can be developed.

EVALUATION REQUIREMENTS: Evaluations are used to decide if your child is eligible for early intervention. The evaluation should:

- provide an opportunity for you to participate;
- be given only with your written permission;
- be completed within 45 days;
- include testing that is done by trained personnel;
- include your family's concerns; and
- include a review of your child's health and developmental records.

In addition, the evaluation should review your child's development in five areas, including:

- cognitive development — the way your child learns;
- physical development — including vision and hearing (it is best if your child's vision and hearing are evaluated first);
- communicative development — how your child understands and expresses language;
- adaptive development — how your child performs routine activities; and
- social/emotional development — how your child perceives himself or herself and interacts with others.

ELIGIBILITY FOR ALABAMA'S EARLY INTERVENTION SYSTEM: In Alabama, a child is eligible for early intervention support and services if he or she is under the age of 3 and has at least a 25 percent delay in any of the five developmental areas

tested during the evaluation. A child is also eligible if he or she has a diagnosis of a condition that likely will result in a delay in development.

Some of the conditions include:

- vision or hearing impairments;
- inborn errors of metabolism;
- microcephaly;
- fetal alcohol syndrome;
- Down syndrome;
- cerebral palsy; and
- chromosomal abnormalities.

ASSESSMENT: Once your child has been determined eligible, further testing may be needed to determine specific support and service needs. The same guidelines for the evaluation should be used during an assessment and should also include a family assessment, if you agree. The family assessment should help identify your family's resources, priorities, concerns and supports as they relate to your child. The overall assessment should also identify where your child plays and learns, activities your family enjoys, and early intervention supports that are needed by your child and family to meet the identified needs.

PROCESS: During the evaluation and assessment process, you and your child will be working with at least two different professionals to learn as much as possible about your child's needs. You will be able to discuss the kinds of community resources and supports available. You can bring a friend or other family members with you who can give more information about your child or who can be there to provide support for you. You can ask questions about the assessment process and how identified resources or services can help you and your child.

To help you in preparing for your child's evaluation and assessment, you may want to think about these questions and take any other information with you that will help.

1. What types of things does my child do well? (e.g., communicating needs, playing with others, walking, running, eating, paying attention, separating from mom or dad)
2. What types of activities are important to my child and family? (e.g. visiting parks or libraries, going to church activities, eating out, shopping)
3. What concerns do I have for my child? (e.g., ability to talk or communicate needs, ability to walk or move about, eating or feeding problems, health issues, hearing or vision problems)

4. In what ways does my child do everyday activities, like communicating with me and with others (pointing, using special words or sounds, using eyes); or move about (walking, crawling, rolling, using specialized equipment)
5. What things do I want to know about my child? (e.g., his or her potential for developing certain skills, ability to learn as other children, best approaches for encouraging development)
6. Who would I like to be involved in the evaluation? (e.g., a physical therapist, a speech therapist, a teacher, a nurse)
7. What other information can I provide that will give a more complete picture of my child? (e.g., are there brothers or sisters in the home? How is my house arranged or adapted for my child? What are the best ways of interacting with my child? Who is my child with most of the time - mom, dad, grandmother, babysitter? What are our daily routines and what setting is my child in most of the day?)
8. What information do I want to share about my family that would help in planning services and programs for my child? (e.g., family members who can or usually do help with child care; the need for child care resources; the availability of or need for financial resources such as Medicaid, SSI or insurance that can help pay for needed services; the availability of or need for transportation for me to use in getting my child to the places where services are provided)
9. What resources and supports are found in my community that would benefit my child and family?

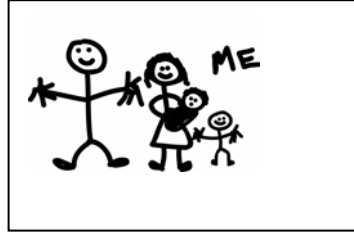
Once the determination process is completed, you should be told whether your child is eligible for Alabama's Early Intervention System. In either case, you have the right to be given the results of the evaluation and assessment and to receive answers to any questions you may have. You should look upon the evaluation and assessment process as a time for learning about your child and about the support systems available in your community. It is not a time for passing judgment on you as a parent. It should be viewed as a positive experience that will be used in making preparations to help your child grow and develop to his or her highest level of achievement.

Persons who may help to evaluate or assess your child and family include physicians, nurses, physical therapists, nutritionists, occupational therapists, special educators/instructors, social workers or speech/language pathologists.

Places where evaluations and assessments may occur include your home, your child's daycare setting, physicians' offices, community or public health facilities, outpatient or well-baby clinics, maternal and child health programs, Medicaid EPSDT programs, Head Start programs, local educational agencies, private service agencies or hospitals

For more information about evaluation and assessment or Alabama's Early Intervention System, call the Early Intervention Office at 1-800-543-3098, En Espanol, 1-866-450-2838.

Alabama's Early Intervention System



An Eligible Family's Guide to the Individualized Family Service Plan: *An Individualized Family Service Plan, or IFSP, translates what is learned from the evaluation and assessment process into a written plan to guide your family, your support system and the EI programs or providers. Parents and professionals can evaluate the effectiveness of the plan as it progresses and can make changes to the program as necessary. The IFSP document outlines your family's goals for your child's development and the ways in which those goals can be achieved.*

WHAT THE IFSP IS TO ACCOMPLISH: The Individualized Family Service Plan is a plan that is important for your eligible child and family. It guides the activities that will help your child develop to his or her fullest potential. The IFSP also is important for your family because it includes you. The IFSP process provides:

- **Team Collaboration:** As a member of the IFSP team, you are given the opportunity to discuss learning environments and to make decisions and to create plans for activities and services that will become your guide.
- **A Partnership:** You will share in the intervention process for your child to the degree that you feel comfortable. Through this partnership, you will help guide the activities that will occur over the following months.

IFSP PROCEDURES: The IFSP planning meetings should be scheduled by you and your service coordinator at a time and in a place that is convenient for you. The written IFSP should be reviewed at least every six months, and a new plan will be developed annually. There are three groups of people who should be involved in the IFSP process. These groups include you, the people who have provided the evaluations and assessments and the people who are involved in helping you and your child, including your service coordinator, therapists, teachers, physicians, social workers, nurses; and others who are important to your child's development, such as family members.

WHAT THE IFSP CONTAINS: Your child's IFSP should contain a description of your child's strengths and needs; a description of your family's resources, priorities and concerns, if you so desire; written desired outcomes that can be evaluated; a description of where supports and appropriate services will be provided; a written plan for the transition to other services/programs when appropriate; and the names of service providers (people who are involved in your child's services) and the service coordinator.

As the parent, you play an important role in planning for your child. After helping in the evaluation and assessment of your child, you should begin preparing for the next step, which is the development of a plan to help guide you and others. To help in planning for the development of the Individualized Family Service Plan, you may want to think about these questions:

What are the natural routines for you and your family? (e.g., Where does your child spend most of his day? What activities does your family enjoy?)

What do you want for your child and family? (e.g., What new skills do you want your child to develop? What assistance do you need in helping your child? Who would you like to have working with your child and family? What would you like to have happen differently for your child and family?)

Would you like to invite others to attend the IFSP planning meeting? (e.g., a family member, a friend, another parent who has a child with a disability, a professional who has worked with your child)

Are there any changes about to happen in your child's life or in your family life for which plans need to be made? (e.g., a new child care provider, a new doctor, the birth of a child, a change in residence)

Remember, this planning process is for you and your child. You are the one who should make the decisions about what is best for your child and family based on the information you have been given during the evaluation and assessment process. Don't hesitate to express your concerns or doubts about what is happening during the planning process.

SUPPORTS: Early intervention supports and services should be defined on each child's Individualized Family Service Plan and should be designed to strengthen the development of the child, to meet the needs of your child and family, and to help your child achieve the outcomes you desire.

Any EI services listed on the IFSP should meet certain guidelines. These guidelines specify that the services:

- be tailored to meet the specific needs of your child;
- be designed to enhance your child's development and your capacity for meeting your child's special needs;
- be selected by you and the team together;
- be provided under public supervision;

- be provided by individuals who are qualified; and
- be provided in a natural environment in which infants or toddlers without disabilities participate to the maximum extent appropriate in meeting the needs of your child.

1 Qualified Personnel to deliver early intervention includes audiologists, family therapists, nurses, nutritionists, occupational therapists, orientation and mobility specialists, pediatricians and other physicians, physical therapists, psychologists, social workers, special educators/instructors, speech-language pathologists, and others who meet qualifications under Alabama's Early Intervention System.

SERVICES: The following services should be available for eligible infants and toddlers as determined necessary through the process of evaluation/assessment and IFSP development:

Assistive technology	Occupational therapy services
Audiology	Physical therapy services
Family training, counseling, and home visits	Psychological services
Health services*	Service coordination
Medical services (for diagnosis or evaluation only)	Social work services
Nursing services	Special instruction
Nutrition services	Speech-language pathology
	Transportation and related costs
	Vision services

** Health Services are those that must be included in the plan [IFSP] because they are necessary to enable the infant or toddler to benefit from the other early intervention services. Part C services are not services that are surgical or purely medical, are not devices necessary to control or treat a medical condition, or are not medical health services such as immunization and regular well-baby care.*

In preparing for the IFSP process, you may want to gather information that is pertinent to your child's needs. Such information may include the following:

- Activities that are important to your family
- Activities that have been recommended by a professional involved in your child's care
- Community resources, agencies and groups that offer supports to your child and family
- Special appliances, equipment or supplies that your child uses
- A nutrition care plan and eating schedule

The worksheets following this section may help you in compiling necessary information. It is important to remember that you, as a parent, are a primary decision maker and contributor to the IFSP process. The better prepared you are, the better the outcome.

Community Resources that Offer My Family Support

Community Resource: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Address: _____

Names of people you usually talk to: _____

Name and title of the head of this resource organization is:

_____, _____

Community Resource: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Address: _____

Names of people you usually talk to: _____

Name and title of the head of this resource organization is:

_____, _____

Community Resource: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Address: _____

Names of people you usually talk to: _____

Name and title of the head of this resource organization is:

_____, _____

Special Appliances, Equipment or Supplies We Use

Appliance/Equipment/Supply:

(Serial Number, if known): _____

Name & Address of Supplier/Company: _____

Telephone Number/Website: _____

Date Received _____

Appliance/Equipment/Supply:

(Serial Number, if known): _____

Name & Address of Supplier/Company: _____

Telephone Number/Website: _____

Date Received _____

Sources of Support for My Family

1: _____

Contact Person: _____

Telephone Number/Email: _____

2: _____

Contact Person: _____

Telephone Number/Email: _____

3: _____

Contact Person: _____

Telephone Number/Email: _____

4: _____

Contact Person: _____

Telephone Number/Email: _____

5: _____

Contact Person: _____

Telephone Number/Email _____

Nutrition Care Plan

Age: _____ Recommended weight range: _____

Weight: _____ Height: _____ Date: _____

Weight: _____ Height: _____ Date: _____

Weight: _____ Height: _____ Date: _____

Estimated calories needed daily: _____

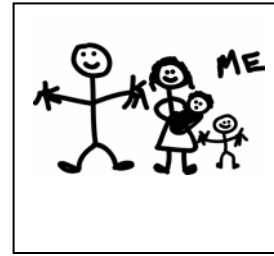
Special Needs or Supplements: _____

Diet Restrictions or Allergies: _____

Food Likes: _____

Food Dislikes: _____

Alabama's Early Intervention System



***An Eligible Family's Guide to Service Coordination:** Service coordination is provided through the Early Intervention System to offer support and guidance for your family. Your service coordinator is your contact person who will help you locate resources, find community supports and receive services.*

ROLE OF THE SERVICE COORDINATOR: Service coordinators generally help families build on their strengths. They help families identify their own needs, access needed resources, make informed decisions and assume as much responsibility as possible.

SERVICE COORDINATION ACTIVITIES: There are four main activities that your service coordinator will do to help you with your child's early intervention program:

- **Consultation** - Your service coordinator will work closely with you and other service providers to help you find resources and make sure that information is shared and that everyone understands the goals for your child's development.
- **Training or Teaching** - Your service coordinator will help you learn how and where to look for resources in your own community, how to ask questions, how to be a team member and how to tell whether progress is being made. Your service coordinator can also help to teach others about your child and family to make sure that everyone is working together toward the same goals.
- **Assessment and Development of an Individualized Family Service Plan** - Your service coordinator will help to assess your child and family's needs and then help to design, organize and review the activities needed to meet those needs. After plans have been made, the service coordinator will assist with such things as finding possible supports and services and filling out necessary forms.
- **Coordination** - Your service coordinator will make sure that services, appointments and activities provided are coordinated in the best interest of your child and family. Your service coordinator is the contact person for your family and other service providers, and is the link between resources, services and supports.

SERVICE COORDINATOR REQUIREMENTS: The person who is your service coordinator must meet federal and state requirements. Service coordinators must understand what makes a child eligible for AEIS, understand federal and state regulations, know resources available in your community, services, payment systems and other important information about Alabama's Early Intervention System.

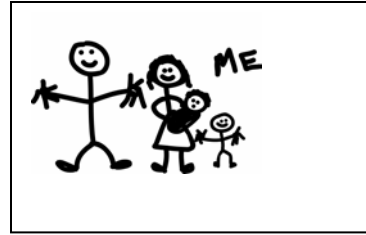
SERVICE COORDINATOR ACTIVITIES: Your service coordinator will tailor his or her activities to meet your needs and desires. You will help to decide just what you want your service coordinator to do, when to do it, how long to do it and what the results should be. Here are some of the things your service coordinator can do:

- Be available to you to discuss your child, your concerns and how well things are going.
- Help you make decisions about your child's needs, your preferences for the types of supports and services needed and the methods of receiving them.
- Help you decide what information you want, how much you want at one time and how you want to get it (for example, through observing activities, reading material, watching videotapes, or talking with other parents or professionals).
- Help you decide how much responsibility you want at any one time and for any activity that may be needed. (For example, you may want to be totally in charge of certain activities at certain times when you feel confident that you can handle the situation, or you may not be able to handle any extra work at certain times.)
- Help you explore any of your family's resources that may be helpful in providing for your child (such as transportation, location of EI activities, or financial or emotional support).
- Help you plan timelines for getting things done and decide who should do them (things like sharing information, calling upon resources for help, delivering services and obtaining needed equipment). This is a basic part of the Individualized Family Service Plan process.
- Help you make appointments, if necessary, for services or family supports and help you to coordinate schedules so that appointments don't interfere with other important activities.
- Help you locate activities for your child and family.

- Help you plan for changes by discussing options, visiting new programs and making plans to prepare your child, family and the new service providers for the change.
- Help you understand what is happening with your child by helping you find answers to questions you have about your child, and helping you talk with others who are involved with your child and family.

For more information about service coordination or Alabama's Early Intervention System, call the Early Intervention Office at 1-800-543-3098, En Espanol, 1-866-450-2838.

Alabama's Early Intervention System



An Eligible Family's Guide to Child and Parent Rights: Children and parents who are served through Alabama's Early Intervention System have certain rights that are protected under state and federal regulations. These rights are in place to ensure that early intervention supports, services, activities and procedures are delivered in the best interest of the children and families served.

CHILD AND PARENT RIGHTS IN ALABAMA'S EARLY INTERVENTION SYSTEM:

- **Informed Consent:** You should understand all the information you are given about early intervention and give your written permission for services. Your permission is voluntary, meaning you do not have to give permission if you have concerns or questions, and you can cancel your permission at any time.
- **Evaluation:** Once referred through Alabama's Early Intervention System, your child is entitled to have an evaluation within 45 days to help determine if he or she is eligible.
- **Assessment:** Once determined eligible under Alabama's Early Intervention System, your child and family are entitled to have ongoing assessments conducted to determine your child's unique needs; your family's resources; priorities and concerns related to your child's development; and the nature and extent of early intervention support and services needed.
- **Written Prior Notice:** Service providers must give you written notice before services can be changed or refused.
- **Review of Records:** As a parent, you can review your child's early intervention records.
- **Confidentiality of Records:** You must give your written permission before your child's records can be shared with other individuals or agencies.
- **Individualized Family Service Plan:** Once your child has been determined eligible, he or she is entitled to have an Individualized Family Service Plan developed within the 45-day period.
- **Mediation:** This is a voluntary process, and there is an impartial mediator available to you in the event you have issues that need to be resolved.

- **Impartial Due Process Hearing:** You have the right to have a hearing if there are any disputes.
- **Impartial Resolution of Complaints:** You have the right to ask for any issues to be resolved when you believe federal laws or regulations have been violated.
- **Surrogate Parents:** Eligible children whose parents cannot be identified or located or who are wards of the state have the right to have a surrogate parent represent them in all matters pertaining to Part C.

Once your child has been referred to Alabama's Early Intervention System through Child Find, your rights under these procedural safeguards should be explained to you by the contact person within your local community.

INFORMATION TO ASSIST YOU IN UNDERSTANDING YOUR RIGHTS:

- a written, detailed explanation of your rights and the procedures to use in fulfilling your rights,
- permission forms to sign giving your consent for your child to be evaluated and for the evaluation information to be given to service providers as appropriate,
- the written results of the evaluation and assessments conducted on your child and family,
- a copy of the Individualized Family Service Plan developed with you for your child and family, and
- any other information relating to early intervention services for your child that you request.

For more information on child and parent rights or Alabama's Early Intervention System, call the Early Intervention Office at 1-800-543-3098, En Espanol, 1-866-450-2838.